Diversity Committee
Acalanes Union High School District
Charter, History, and Accomplishments

Founding Date:	January 1999	
Founders:	Erik Honda	English Dept., Acalanes
	Basheer Edun	Math Dept., Campolindo
District Administration Representatives:		
Founding:	Johanna VanderMolen	Assoc. Superintendent - Curriculum
Past:	Bev Sadler	Assoc. Superintendent - Curriculum
	Bill Rada	Asst. Superintendent, Human Resources
	Frank Acojido	Director of Human Resources
Current:	Dennis Regalado	Director of Community and Alternative Education

Members: Teachers, students, parents, staff, and community members from all five sites in the Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD).

The Diversity Committee was created with the aim of promoting diversity in four areas, what we call the **Four Pillars of Diversity:**

I. **Diversity in Student Activities**: To foster and support the diversity-related events (such as International Week at Las Lomas, Diversity Week at Acalanes, and the diversity-themed assembly program at Campolindo) that already exist, and to expand those districtwide. To

create and foster ongoing awareness of issues related to intolerance on campus.

II. **Diversity in Curriculum**: To encourage the use and development of multicultural curricula in the classrooms of AUHSD.

III. **Diversity in Hiring: To serve our students better by recruiting a faculty that more** adequately mirrors the diversity of the student population, of the available teaching pool, of the state, and of the nation.

IV. **Diversity in Staff Development**: To develop and encourage participation in staff development activities that will make our faculty and staff more sensitive to and knowledgeable about diversity issues, and better able to respond to episodes of intolerance on campus.

Diversity Committee Accomplishments

2000-2005(Diversity Calendar - Student Activities) The Diversity Committee has produced six editions (2000-2005) of the AUHSD **Diversity Calendar**. The calendars utilize student-created artwork for each month, which calls attention to various diversity-related issues, and are marked with religious and other holidays. Each year, the calendars are distributed to teachers at all sites and hang on the walls of most district classrooms. They encourage teachers and students to be sensitive to the religious and cultural traditions of all students, and to be aware of holidays or cultural events when scheduling tests, field trips, or other activities.

2002-2005(Diversity Weeks - Student Activities) The Diversity Committee oversaw the development and planning of the **Diversity Weeks** that have taken place at Acalanes in the spring of 2002 through 2006, and at Miramonte in 2006. Diversity Weeks have included in-class discussion of diversity issues, Diversity Awareness Assemblies, Peer Education Workshops by the Gay-Straight Alliance in all freshman English classes, and an Intolerance Prevention Workshop addressing racism, classism, sexism, and homophobia. Lunch activities also include food in the quad and musical performances. The Diversity Committee has also provided support for International Culture Week at Las Lomas in 2004-2006. These events are generally held two weeks before Spring Break each year.

2004-2006 The Diversity Committee supported the Acalanes Site Diversity Team's development of a **Climate of Tolerance Statement** that first appeared in the Acalanes Planner in 2004-05. It reads:

> **"We are committed to maintaining a climate of tolerance and acceptance. Racism, sexism, homophobia and ethnic, cultural, and religious intolerance are not accepted in class or on campus at any time. Use of inappropriate language or actions which harass, insult, or demean a student, staff member, or school employee will not be tolerated and will be disciplined to the fullest extent of school policy."**

Campolindo and Las Lomas added the statement to their planners for the 2005-06 school year, and administrators discussed diversity issues with students during their traditional fall visits to English classrooms. At Acalanes and Campolindo in 2005 those visits began with a discussion of the Climate of Tolerance statement, thus highlighting the centrality of a climate of mutual respect to a safe and secure campus environment. Miramonte plans to add the statement to its planner for the 2006-07 school year.

2005-2006: The Diversity Committee helped facilitate and advance **responses to incidents of racism at sporting events** that occurred in the spring of 2005 and fall of 2006 at Acalanes and Miramonte. Responses included a Pledge of Tolerance activity at both schools, a reflective letter to the offended school at Miramonte, an Intolerance Workshop at Acalanes, and a great deal of community reflection and soul-searching. At Acalanes, leadership is working on developing the Monthly Diversity Themes (see below) in a major way starting in 2006-07, partly in response to these incidents. At Miramonte, a Diversity Club has sprung up under the direction of Kim Everist, and students have created a Miramonte Tolerance movement. In the end, a wave of positive energy seems to have drowned out the original negativity of the initial incidents.

2006: The Diversity Committee facilitated the expansion of a **Paraguayan School Supply Drive** begun by student Ignacio Garrat at Las Lomas in 2005 to all four comprehensive schools in the district. In total, students at the four sites gathered *over 60 large boxes* of supplies! The

supplies will be personally delivered by Mr. Garrat to the high school in a town five days upriver from the nearest road this summer.

2005-2006: The Diversity Committee has developed districtwide **Monthly Diversity Themes** to address issues of intolerance on campus. The impetus was an Acalanes parent's suggestion that we move away from the "1970's National Geographic" style of diversity awareness, and toward something more proactive and issues-oriented. The themes are as follows:

September: Diversity Awareness Month (advertise Diversity Committee)
October: Racism Awareness Month
November: Homophobia Awareness Month
December/January: Sexism and Sexual Harassment Awareness Month
February: Classism and Social Exclusion Awareness Month
March: All of the above. Diversity Week is two weeks before Spring Break

The months were inaugurated in 2005 with bulletin announcements and posters at Acalanes, Campolindo, and Las Lomas. We hope to add activities each year to make them more relevant and intense. Bulletin announcements are posted on the Diversity Committee Blackboard site.

2000-2003 (Diverse Curriculum Survey - Curriculum): The Diversity Committee designed and distributed a **Diverse Curriculum Survey**, which analyzed the degree to which Social Studies and English departments at the sites incorporate diverse curricular materials. The long-range goal is to see sites sharing their resources and methodologies for teaching about our complex world.

1999-present (Hiring): During the time the Diversity Committee has been in existence, **the number of teachers of color in the district has tripled**, from 7 to 21. In Spring 1999 Diversity Committee co-chairs Basheer Edun and Erik Honda attended a Project Pipeline recruitment fair

in Sacramento. In 1998 there were 7 faculty members of color in AUHSD. In the fall of 1999 eight more were hired, doubling minority representation on our campuses. Four more teachers of color were hired in Fall 2000, and three more in fall of 2001. The district now regularly recruits through Project Pipeline. In 2003, the AUHSD tenured its first permanent African American teacher, and hired its first African American administrator. Although minority representation does not yet match our student percentages, let alone the diversity of the teaching pool in the state, we are making progress.

2002-2004 (Leadership - Student Activities): The Diversity Committee requested and leadership teams approved a **Diversity Chair Student Government Position** that began at Acalanes in 2002, and at Miramonte and Las Lomas in 2004. The Diversity Chair attends districtwide Diversity Committee meetings, and coordinates diversity-related activities on his or her campus. A Diversity Chair position had previously existed at Campolindo.

2000-2002 (Homophobia - Staff Development): The Diversity Committee advocated for and oversaw the presentation of the **Safe Schools Project** by Catholic Charities of the East Bay, a faculty inservice designed to help teachers deal with the widespread problem of homophobia on their campuses, and to develop strategies to stop hate violence before it starts. The workshop was presented at Acalanes, Campolindo, and Miramonte in 2000, and at Las Lomas in 2001.

2001-2005 (Homophobia - Student Activities): The Diversity Committee encouraged and facilitated the work of the Gay Straight Alliances at Acalanes and Las Lomas in their development of **Peer Education Programs on Homophobia**. Students at Acalanes created a video, and ran full class period workshops in over 20 classrooms in the spring of 2001, and in over 30 in the spring of 2002. They presented the program to *all* freshman English classes at Acalanes in March 2003. The Las Lomas GSA developed their own program, and presented it to over 30 classrooms during 2001-02, including presentations to PE/Health classes. As of 2004, the Acalanes program has become an established part of the freshman English curriculum, and now includes discussion of the related short stories, "Am I Blue" and "Rose-Johnny" as well as the Peer Education presentations.

2000 (Curriculum): The Diversity Committee was instrumental in providing a history-based curriculum, **"A World of Difference"** to teachers through a "Teaching Tolerance" workshop held early in the Fall of 2000. The workshop was attended by 45 teachers, and parts of the curriculum are now being used by teachers at all four sites.

Mission Statement: Our purpose is to achieve harmony among students, staff, and the community, and to foster respect for the dignity of each person. To reach our goal of dignity for the individual, we shall design a learning environment that inspires individual growth while celebrating differences. Our aim is to achieve the greatest possible understanding of all points of view. Our motto shall be "respect for the worth of each human being."

Meetings: Monthly (Second Thursday of each month)
3:45 – 5 p.m.

Location: The meetings rotate on a monthly basis between the District Office Board Room and the conference rooms at the five school sites. The meeting schedule is available on the district website, under "Community", is printed at the bottom of each month's

minutes, and is available by e-mailing Erik Honda (address below).

To join: Just e-mail Erik Honda at Acalanes (ehonda@aclanes.k12.ca.us) or Basheer Edun at Campolindo (bedun@aclanes.k12.ca.us). He'll send you minutes of the last meeting, which include a date and time for the next one, and add you to our e-mail address book. See you there!